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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [ECON](#) [SOCI](#) [KCUL](#) [CH](#)
SUBJECT: CHINA WILL NOT "MECHANICALLY ADOPT" WESTERN
MODELS, NPC CHAIRMAN SAYS IN MARCH 9 REPORT

REF: A. BEIJING 607
[1](#)B. BEIJING 589
[1](#)C. BEIJING 580
[1](#)D. BEIJING 559
[1](#)E. BEIJING 531

Classified By: Political Internal Unit Chief
Dan Kritenbrink. Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

SUMMARY

[1](#)1. (C) National People's Congress (NPC) Chairman Wu Bangguo on March 9 emphasized the differences between China's NPC system and foreign legislatures, declaring that China would not "mechanically adopt" Western models, in delivering his annual report on the nominal legislature's accomplishments and goals for the year ahead. Wu hinted at the existence of criticism or confusion over the NPC's oversight role and indirectly took a jab at comments by the U.S. Congress on Taiwan and Tibet. In reviewing the past year's accomplishments, Wu emphasized the NPC's rapid support of the government during last year's Sichuan earthquake, while also taking credit for improving social welfare and promoting economic development. The main tasks in the coming year were completing establishment of a "socialist" legal system, improving oversight of the government, strengthening the role of NPC deputies and carrying out foreign relations. Wu also focused on China's response to the global financial crisis while emphasizing the need to continue "stable and rapid" economic growth and expand the social safety net in the interest of "stability." End Summary.

WU DELIVERS ANNUAL NPC STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT

[1](#)2. (C) National People's Congress (NPC) Chairman Wu Bangguo delivered the annual report of the NPC Standing Committee to the assembled delegates during the second plenary session of this year's legislative conclave on March 9. Wu, who is also the second-ranking member of the Party's ruling Politburo Standing Committee, largely followed the script of recent years, reviewing the Standing Committee's achievements of the previous year and laying out the goals of the coming year, with an emphasis on enacting legislation, supporting Party decisions, facilitating the implementation of policy and conducting oversight of the government. While much of the general narrative in his report was a verbatim reiteration of previous years' reports, the specifics focused on the hot issues of the day, primarily China's measures for dealing with the global financial crisis while maintaining efforts to continue "stable and rapid" economic growth and expand the social safety net for Chinese citizens in the interest of "stability."

HARD LINE ON PARTY CONTROL, NO WESTERN MODELS

[1](#)3. (C) In a departure from previous NPC Standing Committee

reports, however, Wu went to some lengths to underscore the differences between China's political order and those of the West. China must draw on the political achievements of other countries but should "never simply copy" Western systems or "introduce a system of multiple parties holding office in rotation" or a system with "the separation of three powers or bicameral legislature." Wu gave a lengthy discourse on the supposed differences between the NPC and Western governments, calling on deputies to "fully recognize the essential differences between the system of people's congresses and Western capitalist countries' system of political power," differences between the intra-government relations in China and the West and "differences between deputies to the NPC and members of Western parliaments and congresses." Going beyond previous reports in emphasizing the "core" role of the Communist Party in the NPC, Wu stated that the work of the NPC "must all be conducive to strengthening and improving the leadership of the Party and consolidating its position as the ruling party" and quoted Deng Xiaoping as declaring that "there can be no wavering from this principle." The CCP is the "core of the country's leadership and the ruling party," Wu concluded, declaring that "all deputies, whether or not they are communists," should "fulfill their responsibilities to serve the people under the leadership of the CCP in accordance with the law."

14. (C) In his review of China's political order in last year's report, Wu also emphasized the Party's leading role and the need for a system that "accords with our national conditions" and that does not include "'tripartite powers' or a 'bicameral system'." Nevertheless, last year Wu made no reference to the West or the need to distinguish clearly

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between China's system and Western models. In addition, there was no discussion of separation of powers, bicameralism or other Western political institutions in the 2007 Standing Committee report.

15. (C) Wu's remark stating that China would not adopt a system of rotating party rule was the lead headline the next day on the front page of the influential Beijing municipal daily Xinjing Bao. In a brief discussion with PolOff at the conclusion of the session, an NPC Foreign Affairs Committee staff member volunteered that the section on differences with foreign political systems was "new." When asked why he thought Wu decided to emphasize that point, the staffer asserted that it was to "educate NPC delegates on the purpose and function of the NPC." The staffer rejected PolOff's question as to whether Wu's emphasis might reflect concern over interest by NPC delegates in Western political systems, with the staffer adding that "many people in China do not understand China's government" and so there is a need to "educate" them.

CONTACTS COMMENT ON CONSERVATIVE LINE

16. (C) Two Embassy contacts separately attributed the warning against Western political forms to the leadership's concerns over stability during the economic downturn and Wu's personal hard-line political leanings. Wang Chong (protect), former international affairs columnist for the Communist Youth Daily (Zhongguo Qingnian Bao, a paper run by the Communist Youth League) told PolOff on March 11 that Wu is basically an "obedient" cadre who was warning deputies against rocking the political boat during China's current economic crisis. Cai Dingjian (protect), a former NPC staffer who is now a professor at Peking University and the Chinese University of Political Science and Law, told PolOff on March 4, just prior to the NPC's opening, that Wu is an "extremely conservative" politician who is determined to ensure that the NPC "tows the Party line" and "causes no trouble" for the Party leadership. The "latest excuse" for not carrying out political reform is the economic crisis, but in reality, Wu Bangguo has "absolutely no desire" to see the NPC become the driver of

any reform, Cai asserted. Cai even speculated that shortening this year's NPC session to just over eight days was an effort by Wu to decrease the chances of "any surprises," rather than to "save money" as claimed by PRC propaganda.

HINTING AT CRITICISM OF NPC OVERSIGHT

¶17. (C) Although the annual NPC report normally has a section outlining the nominal legislature's deficiencies and room for improvement, Wu appeared to go beyond the normal pro-forma litany of problems by hinting at the existence of criticism or confusion over the NPC's oversight role. "We need to clear up three points" in order do oversight work "more effectively," Wu said. First, the NPC's power is granted by the PRC constitution and "carries the force of law," and the NPC's oversight work is "well worth doing," Wu stressed. Second, even though the NPC oversees government work, "this does not mean it is confrontational or creates difficulties for the parties it oversees." When government bodies "willingly accept" NPC oversight, this helps ensure "smooth and fair" administration, Wu said. The third area Wu sought to "clarify," he said, was to focus the NPC's efforts on "practical results."

ACHIEVEMENTS AND GOALS

¶18. (C) The major achievements of the NPC Standing Committee in the last year, according to Wu's report, were in the areas of natural disaster response (particularly the May 2008 Sichuan earthquake), economic development, rural reform, "people's well-being" (primarily expanding the social safety net), and the routine work of the NPC. The section on the Government's response to the earthquake praised the NPC Standing Committee for its ability to quickly adjust its focus and procedures to support government response efforts, including allocating funds and amending budgets, and in enacting emergency response legislation and carrying out on-site investigations in Sichuan to inform Government policy. In the economic development section, Wu acknowledged that efforts thus far to change the "pattern of economic development" have fallen short, as industry is still too dominant (instead of the service sector having a greater role), exports and investment still drive growth (instead of increased domestic demand) and "serious problems" remain, such as "mounting pressures on resources and the environment, increasing difficulty in expanding employment and

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insufficient consumption."

¶19. (C) The report appeared to take an indirect jab at the U.S. Congress by stating that, in response to "provocations from the congresses of some countries concerning the Taiwan and Tibet questions," China had "engaged in fierce struggle and defended China's core interests." The report made no mention of the U.S. Congress in its discussion of "consolidating mechanisms" for regular exchanges with foreign legislatures, noting only that it improved dialogue with Great Britain, France, Japan, South Korea and Egypt.

¶10. (C) Laying out the priorities for the NPC Standing Committee in the coming year, Wu listed as areas for improvement the need to take a "target-focused" approach with an emphasis on key problems, the need to urge the government to enact implementing regulations in a timely way and the usual pledge to provide better support to deputies. Wu also recommended that the NPC coordinate better among the NPC special committees, increase awareness among the public and government organs about the rule of law, "accept the oversight of the people" and "listen to the opinions of deputies." The NPC would "take decisive steps" to meet the previously set goal of "establishing a legal system of socialism with Chinese characteristics" by the year 2010, Wu

emphasized. Wu said the emerging legal system was "dynamic, open and in the process of development." Finally, Wu returned to the theme of avoiding "Western" legal models, which "cannot be copied mechanically in establishing our own." Some Western laws, Wu said, are "incompatible" with Chinese conditions, and China needs to enact laws to meet its needs that may not be part of other legal systems.

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